PUBLIC MIND MANIPULATION TECHNOLOGIES AS A MECHANISM AGAINST GOVERNMENT AND SOCIETY DISSOCIATION

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The article introduces a new method of analyzing public mind manipulation which Russian authorities has been broadly using to establish neotraditional forms of identity for Russian society. Formalist-fictional typing is the basic method of manipulation due to a number of reasons: lack of common understanding of social value, weak informal control and vague roles institutionalization. It can be explained by the fact that there is a certain distance in interaction between the government and society. Such distance is not uncommon for Russian identity yet it indicates a split in society caused by unequivocal attitude towards current modernization programs. New technologies enable both narrowing the distance between power and society and mitigate effects of the split caused by modernization. The technologies of public mind manipulation the article focuses on are more of affective rather than cognitive nature. Society is eager to obey to government and to turn a blind eye to its authoritative manners driven by fears of social instability, increasing criminality and social deprivation. This situation provides that the analyzed ways of interaction are artificial and short-lived.

Key words: social manipulations, traditionalism, ideology, patriotism, nation, power, society, dialogue, social security.

INTRODUCTION

We are living in a changing world, its slogan could have been "nothing endures but changes". Changes affect all spheres of Russian society. Transformations of today are hardly bearable - exacerbated by general crisis in Russian society that struck the well established mechanism of interaction between government and society. Systemic in nature, the crisis has affected all channels of communications: it has hit ideology and devaluated the civil values in Russian society which shape a single societal field, crashed social institutions, including the government, and blocked common ways of interaction between social actors. At time Russian society suffers from identity crisis which takes the form of painful search for its own socio-cultural specifics and for the place in milestone periods of world's civilization evolution.

In such circumstances, the government strives to find common denominators for societal consolidation. Effective solutions empower new mechanisms of dialogue which basically reinforce social integrity in all societies.

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METHODS

The study is built upon fundamental principle of historicism, comparative historical analysis, and typification. The basic method is formalist-fictional typing. The reasons for such approach are that Russian society lacks normative foundations for common understanding of social values, that means that value-based distinctions are feebly marked, pressure of informal control is weak and social roles are vaguely institutionalized. In this regard formalist-fictional methods built by superficial actualization of traditional values play the key role in strengthening social stability and integrating Russian society.

One of the problems of Russian society is maladjustment which may contribute to social instability, and the solution requires application of certain technologies in interaction between the government and society. Some of them are already pursued by the authorities. Let's consider their systematic properties:

1) ideology as basis for dialogue between government and society;

2) revival of patriotism;

3) appeal to traditional values;

4) popularization of enemy image in public mind;

5) large-scale manipulation of public mind.

The mentioned elements of this theoretical model will be further reviewed in their connection with interaction between the government and society.

RESULTS

Ideology as basis for dialogue between government and society. Ideology helps to build values which induce self-consciousness in large societal communities (Marshak, 2012). Ideology directs axiological vectors for manipulator's good and shapes cognitive aspect of the interaction model. The most efficient instrument to this end are ideologemes – simplified slogans which provide partial attribution to rule public mind (Gusdorf, 2015).

Finally ideology has protective function and ensures social stability (Kuznetsov, 2004). Manipulators separate evaluative dimensions beyond the grasp of a common member of a community to smooth contradictions in public mind. Ideology, axiological in its nature, puts values which sustain reverberates in public consciousness in order and identifies its adherents as "friends". At the same time stereotyped values draw line between "friends" and "foes" who have other values and attitudes (Lippman, 1950).

Another function of ideologemes this study focuses on is construction of mythologemes. Their role is to expand judgments on reality beyond category "true or false". "Myths are emotionally colored judgments on phenomena and processes which occur in nature and in the world, description of the world. Any truth accepted

as such in a culture functions in accordance with the laws of myth and never comes just to immediate perception (appeal to truth is always an appeal to myth), because every truth is a myth, something taken on trust as cultural evidence…" (Kosov, 2008). That is their functions – to shape public mind in such a way that it is ready to make judgments on social reality in clearly defined cognitive boundaries with certain affective background and admits clear-cut vectors of communication. Social mythologemes may exist only in the unconscious, beyond confines of rational comprehension. Their transition to consciousness and attempts of its critical assessment have detrimental effect and lead to their desacralization and disintegration. Thus their existence depends on stability, and stability, a fundamental property, depends on social ability to find the strength to maintain these enduring cognitive formations.

It is notable that social mythology gnoseologically supports accumulation of historical experience and "activation and coordination of moves aimed at survival and evolution of an ethnos" (Kovalenko and Ermolaeva, 2008).

World history has proved not just once that the most efficient way of construction and maintenance of social mythologemes is accumulation of heroic spirits and construction of heroic world (Bukodi and Roert, 2007). By building mythologemes their makers get inspired with real life (pioneer heroes, Stakhanovite movement) with the glorious past. Personification of history is one of the best mechanisms for its comprehension. Not incidentally, retranslation of various heroes of the past in mind shapes stereotypical social picture. Its sustainability depends on ability of the hero to maintain social sensibility to ideological values which define his individuality and inspire to certain behavior (Keen, 1986).

In November 2008 "Admiral" was released. The movie depicts heroic fate of Admiral Kolchak in the midst of Russian society gripped by unrests for the first two decades of the 20th century. Elder generations were brought up to regard the "reds" as their friends ("good guys") and the "whites" as their foes ("bad guys"). Now a new reality with a reversed axiological vector is constructed. Public consciousness embraces attitudes which are cornerstones for stereotypes. Thus Admiral Kolchak and his companions amid the "whites" are perceived as "our guys", and the movie appeals to traditional values of Russian society which seem to be irreversibly lost under pressure of Soviet attitudes. However these values revived in forms of new stereotypes reproduce mythologemes which are historically inherent in the past of our country.

Appeal to the past for ideological feeding is not incidental. I. Afanasiev and S. Tikhonova are right to say that "the country is unaware of its real heroes but celebrities. Russians are indifferent to their compatriots, devoted and loyal servants of their country. Astronauts, polar explorers, travelers, pathfinders, scientists and life-savers make rare appearance in news feed. Stories about military heroes of our time are not uncommon, yet disconnected and quickly forgotten" (Afanasiev and

Tikhonova, 2013). It is noteworthy that "Brother 2" was the last attempt of Russian cinema to make up image of the "hero of our time". Moviemakers of "Admiral" as well as of "The 9ᵗʰ company" take their heroes out of the past. As for our time Russian society struck with anomie is still walking in percy pants of "Black "Bimmer" and similar gangster movies which flooded Russian cinemas and TV.

Poor heroics of our time and inevitable appeal to the past which had already had its days make the emerging ideology awkward and artificial. No man ever steps in the same river twice though "river of our time" is a brook which runs dry. The past no matter how attractive it might seem has had its days. It will either make no roots in new circumstances or get twisted into new social forms.

Revival of patriotism. Promotion of patriotism has great importance for interaction between the government and society in our time. First of all it has to do with the fact that patriotism and manipulation of public mind are functionally aimed in one direction. To illustrate this idea let's consider basic elements which patriotism includes:

- – Single race and shared origin;
- – Common language;
- – Shared culture, fate, religion, nation;
- – Shared desires (Gerasimova, 2007).

Patriotism can have great civil significance only if it is not a mental construct of separate individuals and has broad public appeal. Then promotion of patriotism achieves its ends. The same prospective shall be applied to functional meaning of manipulation of public mind.

Promotion of patriotism revokes promotion of national self-consciousness (Chadayev, 2006). Its rise shows that patriotic sentiment is high. When patriotic sentiment is all around it is sensible to talk about patriotism, and manipulation of public mind works out correctly and ensures social integrity.

Affecting relations "society – government" in public perception manipulative strategies seek to ferment social stability and unity mainly by inverting broadly embraced attitudes of patriotic nature in public mind. Patriotism comprises deep layers of cognitive values rooted in age-long experience of national evolution and maintains affective field for their perception positively marked, because such values are considered as immanent and positively "good". It directs social connotations at wide segments of populations and shapes axiological core of dialogue between government and society.

The role of patriotism in this function is to make certain that values matter for wide communities of people. If ideology puts values into confines of a strict system and tries to modify cognitive aspect of stereotype, accumulation of patriotic sentiment in public perception nurtures emotional ambiance for stereotyping process and thus constructs its affective aspect. Without emotional charge raising public

sentiment of social involvement ideology is but stillborn scholar doctrine. Affective nature of patriotism is what makes it a viable and attractive idea for people.

Appeal to traditional values. It is not incidental on current stage of evolution in Russian society that government is preoccupied with traditions. Traditionalism is used for codifying specific behavior patterns. It makes social behavior programmatic. No matter how fast and in which way traditions change they will be still perceived as invariable. In other words their variability will always seem to be false. This property of traditions gives rise to steadily positive stereotyping of interaction between the government and society. Yet control over synthesis of traditionalism and modernism makes the way of manipulation artificial.

Traditions are binding by nature that is why Russian society is not stable enough and disintegrated, suffering from anomie. Traditions help to strengthen social ties, first of all those relating to interaction between the government and society.

Apparently policy pursued by government leans upon the historical past, it tries to turn it into its foothold to achieve desired results in its consolidation with society on the basis of traditionalism mixed with modern challenges. This blend should ripen into steady interaction between the government and society shaping public mind in the way what will make social and institutional relations as well as interaction with the government stable enought.

Popularization of enemy image in public consciousness. Enemy image achieves two ends: 1) self-identification and 2) detection of threats both real and phantom to existence of community (Berkovets, 2011).

In the first case communal values are put to work (ideological pressure brings mechanisms of national self-consciousness into action), and stereotyping process fills up cognitive aspect of artificial stereotype in public mind. Cognitive perceptions draw up connotative vectors which help to tell the friend from the foe (Gudkov, 2011).

What is important to note is that attempts to detect threats to existence of community frame perception of foes and friends (Faces of…, 2013). As affectations installed in public mind launch stereotyping process, causal attribution codes specific properties of "friends" and "foes" so that society draws up a clear image of social reality (Simmel, 2014).

Causal attribution is based on dehumanization of enemy image who is ascribed the most negative properties. After Russian-Georgian clashes in 2008 General office of public prosecutor was instructed by the Russian president to gather evidence to blame Georgia for genocide. To walk the talk Russian TV audience has been regularly informed on mass atrocities of the Georgian army whereas reporters hardly separated the army on war from the nation it represented. This double talk automatically expanded attitude towards soldiers on the Georgian nation and spawned a surge of anti-Georgian sentiment in Russian society.

This illustrates the following pattern: the more intense emotional perception of the enemy is, the faster its estimations turn into the unconscious and get cemented into artificial stereotypes. Their artificialness can be attributed to controlled shaping of the foe image (Stranger, 2014).

There is another important thing which should be taken into account by assessing efficiency of enemy image popularization. Increased hostility and aggression do not necessarily promote better understanding between the government and society but nurtures sentiments used by the government to increase national self-consciousness. Stochastic hostility broods negative anthropological stereotypes in perception of enemies with no connection to the own national values (Smith, 1999). In this regard let's shift to the next element to complete the concept we pushed by analysis of the preceding elements.

Large-scale manipulation of public mind. We primarily mean use of mass media by the government or governmental control over media as we are talking about social manipulations.

The final end in cooperation between the government and mass media – public mind manipulation – is achieved by overall popularization of the new mythological images.

Secular society does not treat myths as sacred in common sense any more. "Moreover, as the individual gets involved into political process and consumes one myths after another, he turns into an object of manipulation" (Lebets, 2008). That is the reason why myths are considered to be products created by media. Media reconstruct myths and build upon the more complex blocks of ideology.

Examining mechanism of media influence on society we will rely upon theoretical groundwork made by E. Polikarpova in her book "Axiological functions of mass media in modern society" (Polikarpova, 2002).

On the first stage value system is adjusted, instilling basic principles and building dominating values. We deal with an absolute good, a common ideal we need to instill in public consciousness. The government with the help of media gambles on such reflections for its purposes. It is generally accepted by traditionalist scholars that the Russian ideal is a strong government with personified power.

Accentuation of Russian civilization specifics appears to become a trend in Russian socio-political studies. In the 90s only few essentialist scholars appealed to traditional Russian values, however it is right to say now that many academics have shifted to traditionalism – not a scary thing anymore which needs to be properly understood to be properly used. These new trends in scientific approaches are not incidental. They keep up with shift in policy of government towards embracing political traditions it used to reject.

On the second stage the most valuable ideas selected by scholars from theoretical background are exploited by media to prove validity of political strategy. The image of a powerful president is connected with economic breakthrough to

shape positive perception of personified power. There was a joke playing around VVP which is both an abbreviation for GDP in Russian and initial letters of Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin' name. Demonstration of power on the international scene obeys the same logic. There is a significant increase in the number of TV shows, series and movies about powerful and strong Russia governed by smart, sensible and responsible leaders. Russian TV has given broad coverage to the campaign in Syria. Many show strong interest in the pre-revolution past, both imperial times and the Moscow and Kiev Rus. The number of movies shot yearly reached soviet output in 2006.

V.V. Zvereva focuses her studies on influence of TV series on public consciousness. She comes to conclusion that "TV of 2000s, especially of the last 2-3 years shapes new complex mythologies. "New Russia" defined as strong and stable nation is opposed to the country in the 1990s (press tries to wipe the latter out of collective mind painting it black as a national catastrophe). Alternatives of "positive" identity proposed in official statements on TV mixed with increasing governmental nationalism breed confidence in the Russian president and military might, hopes for gradual improvement of life quality, and distrust to the Western countries and ex-soviet republics. TV constantly boosts these ideas changing news topics from alarming (messages of high criminality, threats of "international terrorism", machinations of tycoons and spies, plots of the Western governments and especially of the USA) to entertaining and inspiring ("successes", festive concerts, comic shows). Positive tone excludes and marginalizes problematic issues… Russian TV series are also accentuating patrimonial ties and tough confrontation between friends and foes in society. This dichotomy in popular movies is getting supersignificant" (Zvereva, n. d.).

The last but not least link in strategic chain is that values instilled by media in public mind pass to the unconscious. Things come full circle, and consciousness begins to affect media contents. Common ideal turns from rational academic calculations to irrational values dominating public mind.

DISCUSSION

We agree with V. Yakunin who believes that "ideology (national idea) fulfils function of social integration based on shared values and norms and justifies their prevalence. Ideology rationalizes life conditions of a society and defines socially relevant patterns and norms which reproduce unity in historic generations" (Yakunin, 2014).

The same issue was raised in discussions between M. Grischenko and V. Kuznetsov who argues that all ideologies have been equally worthy, unique and significant for spiritual life of Russia. We are inclined to agree with V. Grischenko who claims that governmental policy of ideological pluralism is unacceptable (Grischenko, 2007). It is good for philosophical speculations among academics,

yet unproductive in building national identity (do not to confuse national identity with class identity). We also share attitudes of scholars who talk about promotion of humanism in public mind manipulation in Russia today (Frolova *et al.,* 2015).

In this regard ideas of Edward Leach are very important for understanding of ties between governmental ideology and social mythology. He says that myth is a special sort of story, "divine fable" for those who believe and "magic fairy tale" for those who do not (Leach, 2001). Ch. Flood also emphasized sacredness of social mythology claiming that this is a type of so called divine truth (Flood, 2014).

Conceptions of historic memory should also be taken into account when dealing with understanding of governmental ideology because it plays vital role in transitive periods (Frolova *et al.*, 2015).

To assess the importance of traditions in analysis of public mind manipulation it is worthy to mention idea E. Markaryan voiced in 1978: "when we study traditions, we should follow fundamental principles of self-organization" (Markaryan, 1978). Obviously traditions belong to system of normative regulation of social relations, hence their functionality is reflected in sustenance of well-established state of order (Horowitz, 1985). Therefore traditions have inner capacities for self-development, and that means that they can be exploited as instruments. Various scenarios of evolution of traditions may be defined by internal as well as external impulses. Government chooses arbitrarily how to change this or that traditional form and what to accept as valuable elements of traditionalism or to reject as dysfunctional to sustain the desired social state of order (Larkin *et al.*, 2012).

Policy pursued by the Russian government aims at reconstruction of historic traditions which are immanent to Russian mentality. To support the idea let's quote words of V. Dines in the weekly "Vlast": "understanding the core of relations between the government and society in Russia can't be expressed in political categories which fix unique experience of the Western civilization. Notions of "Russian society", "Russian government", "Russian nations" reflect unique experience of Russia whose archetypes have been reborn throughout the political history till now" (Dines, 2008).

CONCLUSION

As we talk about technologies of public mind manipulation in terms of establishing ties between the government and society we should remind ourselves that they are affective rather than cognitive, that means that their perception is mainly emotive, driven by sentiment of social destiny. There is little rational, cognitive element in it. Society is eager to obey the government and to turn a blind eye on authoritative manners driven by fears of social instability, increasing criminality and social deprivation. We are inclined the say that the methods of interaction we focused on are artificial and short-lived. Immature sense of stability combined with their strategies gives the reason to say that policy of modernization and

global prospects in overcoming social instability are very feeble when pursued in these ways.

We have analyzed mechanisms of public mind manipulation which is broadly used by the government to establish relations with society. Strategies it is based on root in social manipulations which reflect the way the government understands public needs in social integration. This synthesis gives births to social mythologemes and image of the government which is functionally aimed at stirring up social integration, yet they may be too sophisticated and impede the way of modernization. Mechanisms of public mind manipulation embodied in the strategy we focused on objectify society. It becomes unable to self-development, consumes the historic past and exploits its integrative potential through connotations articulated by government.

Acknowledgement

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